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Abstract

This booklet aims to give a concise overview of food and drink in Mycenaean Greece in the light of the epigraphic evidence. It shows, what foodstuffs are mentioned in the Linear B texts, and which are not referred to (and why). It takes a closer look at social and regional differences in nutrition and at the nutritional status of the Mycenaeans. It is demonstrated what the tablets tell us about the organization of food production in the Mycenaean palace states and the Mycenaean system of food rations. Furthermore it takes into consideration the information which the texts provide about the further use of foodstuff, e.g. the offering of food to the gods or the celebration of banquets.

1. Introduction

In the late Bronze Age (ca. 1600-1100 BC) the Mycenaean civilization flourished on mainland Greece, Crete and the Cycladic islands.[1] It witnessed mighty kings, whose influence extended over the entire Aegean Sea, and who stood in the diplomatic and economic contact with the rulers in Egypt and the Near East, residing in splendid palaces, which were surrounded by massive fortifications. In the palace workshops outstanding works of art were produced, officials documented complex administrative processes by means of a specially developed syllabic script, and engineers crisscrossed the country with a sophisticated road system, built bridges and

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* This article is based on a paper, which was delivered at the conference "A man doth not live by bread only. Food, kitchen and cuisine in antiquity" in June 2013 at the University of Wrocław.

[1] For the Mycenaean civilization in general see e.g. John CHADWICK, *The Mycenaean World* (Cambridge 1976); Kenneth and Diana WARDLE, *Cities of Legend: The Mycenaean World* (London 1997); Louise SCHOFIELD, *The Mycenaeans* (London – New York 2007).

laid swamps. What was the livelihood of the people who were responsible for this cultural flowering? What did the Mycenaeans eat and drink, and what do we know about the social context of eating in their time?

2. The Linear B texts and other sources for the study of the Mycenaean diet

The Linear B script[2] was developed in the 15th century BC on the island of Crete in order to create a new writing system to record texts in the Greek language. This creation was probably related to the Mycenaean seizure of power in Crete. The use of the Linear B script came to an end with the fall of the Mycenaean palaces around 1200 BC, and all the texts we have date to the time of the destruction of their finding place. Most of the documents belong to the late, some also to the first half or the middle of the 13th century BC. However, according to the opinion of most scholars, the texts from Knossos date to the early 14th century BC as the palace there was destroyed around 1370 BC. After the destruction of the Mycenaean palaces no more signs of literacy can be found in Greece for the next 400 years.

When dealing with Linear B texts, their specific nature has always to be observed. One the one hand, their interpretation is complicated by their fragmentary state of preservation, on the other hand it is made difficult by the fact that there are still

[2] General and basic information about the Linear B script is provided by Leonard R. PALMER, *The Interpretation of Mycenaean Greek Texts* (Oxford 1963); Michael VENTRIS, John CHADWICK, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek* (2nd edition, Cambridge 1973); James T. HOOKER, *Linear B: An Introduction* (Bristol 1980); Antonin BARTONĚK, *Handbuch des mykenischen Griechisch* (Heidelberg 2003); Yves DUHOUX, Anna MORPURGO DAVIES (ed.), *A Companion to Linear B: Mycenaean Greek Texts and Their World*, Vol. 1-3 (Louvain-la-Neuve 2008-2014).

some ideograms and many terms, among them several *hapax legomena*, which are not securely identified. But what is the content of the Mycenaean documents? All those, who had expected historical texts, legal documents, diplomatic correspondence or literary texts, were bitterly disappointed by the decipherment. There are also no recipes or menus, which could help us to reconstruct the culinary history of the Mycenaean period. Instead, the corpus of the Linear B texts consists only of brief notes of the palatial administration. What we have are inventories, lists of people and of deliveries, and allocations of animals and goods as well as debts and deficits. The texts pertain only to a certain part of a single administrative year. Obviously, it was customary to transfer the information recorded on the clay tablets to another medium at the end of each administrative year, and the tablets were not kept any longer. Contrary to the widespread practice in the Ancient Near East, the clay tablets of the Aegean were never intentionally burned to be stored for a longer span of time. Their preservation is owed only to their hardening in those disastrous fires, which destroyed the Mycenaean palaces. But despite their limited spectrum, the Linear B texts are of great historical value. They provide a kind of "snapshot" of the economic and social situation and of the administration of the palaces. They account for the inventory of various material goods and give us insight into the individual segments of the palatial agriculture, they allow conclusions to be drawn about the political and administrative structures and also shed light on cult and religion of the Mycenaean palaces. Of course, we have to wonder whether these texts, which date to the last few days and weeks before the destruction of the respective palace they were found in, reflect something like the "normal state" of the Mycenaean society, economy and administration.[3]

[3] A useful collection of data on vegetal resources in the texts and in the archaeological record is Isabelle ERARD-CERCEAU, *Les ressources végétales et leur utilisation dans les régions égéens au*

A number of other sources also allow conclusions to be drawn about the Mycenaean eating habits. First, the human skeletal remains have to be mentioned, because on the one hand it can be determined by analysis of the bone collagen (stable isotope analysis), if the deceased person ate more plants or more meat during the last 10 years of his life and how much fish was consumed by this person.[4] On the other hand, anthropological studies of the human skeletal material allow conclusions to be drawn about malnutrition and consequent disorders, as well as about the quality and purity of the food.[5]
Observations of plant and animal residues on archaeological excavations give a good impression of the available food.[6]

Neolithique et à l'age du bronze. Documents archéologiques et documents épigraphiques (Ph. D. dissertation Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne 1985). Compare also Isabelle ERARD-CERCEAU, "Documents sur l'Agriculture mycénienne: peut-on consilier Archéologie et épigraphie?", *Minos* 23 (1988) 183-190.

[4] See Yannis TZEDAKIS, Holley MARTLEW (ed.), *Minoans and Mycenaeans. Flavours of their time* (Athens 1999), 210ff.

[5] See Sarah BISEL, John ANGEL, "Health and Nutrition in Mycenaean Greece. A Study in Human Skeletal Remains, in: Nancy C. WILKIE, William D. E. COULSON (ed.), *Contributions to Aegean Archaeology: Studies in Honor of William A. McDonald* (Minnesota 1985) 197 – 209.

[6] For plant residues on Mycenaean site see Julie M. HANSEN, "Palaeoethnoarchaeology in Greece. Past, Present and Future", in: Nancy C. WILKIE, William D. E. COULSON (ed.), *Contributions to Aegean Archaeology: Studies in Honor of William A. McDonald* (Minnesota 1985) 171-181. Julie M. HANSEN, "Agriculture in the Prehistoric Aegean: Data versus Speculation", *American Journal of Archaeology* 92 (1988) 39-52. Julie M. HANSEN, "Palaeoethnobotany in Regional Perspective", in: Nick KARDULIAS (ed.), *Beyond the Site. Regional studies in the Aegean Area* (Lanham, New York, London 1994) 173-190; Helmut KROLL, "Kulturpflanzen von Tiryns", *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1982) 467-485; Helmut KROLL, *Kastanas. Ausgrabungen in einem Siedlungshügel der Bronze- und Eisenzeit Makedoniens 1975-79. Die Pflanzenfunde*, Prähistorische

Archäologie in Südosteuropa 2 (Berlin 1983); Helmut Kroll, "Zum Ackerbau gegen Ende der mykenischen Epoche in der Argolis", *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1984) 211-222; Helmut KROLL, "Kulturpflanzen von Kalapodi", *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1993) 161-182. For animal remains on Greek Bronze Age sites see Katerina TRANTALIDOU, "Animals and Human Diet in the Prehistoric Aegean", in: David A. HARDY, (ed.), *Thera and the Aegean World III, vol. II Earth Sciences* (London 1990) 392-405; Robert E. SLOAN, Mary Ann DUNCAN, "Zooarchaeology in Nichoria", in: George Robert RAPP, Stanley Earl ASCHENBRENNER (ed.), *Excavations at Nichoria in Southwest Greece I: Site, Environs and Techniques* (Minneapolis 1978) 60-77; Cornelia BECKER, Kastanas. *Ausgrabungen in einem Siedlungshügel der Bronze- und Eisenzeit Makedoniens 1975-1979. Die Tierknochenfunde*, Prähistorische Archäologie in Südosteuropa 5 (Berlin 1986); Angela VON DEN DRIESCH, Joachim BOESSNECK, "Die Tierreste der mykenischen Burg Tiryns bei Nauplion/Peloponnes", in: *Tiryns. Forschungen und Berichte*, Band XI (Mainz am Rhein 1990) 87-164. Manfred STANZEL, *Die Tierreste aus dem Artemis-/ Apollon-Heiligtum bei Kalapodi in Böotien/Griechenland* (Ph. D. dissertation Munich 1991); Günter NOBIS, "Das Gastmahl des Nestor, Herrscher über Pylos. Mythos und Wahrheit über mykenische Tafelfreuden", in: *Tier und Museum* 2:3 (1991) 67-77; Günter NOBIS, "Archäozoologische Untersuchung von Tierresten aus dem "Palast des Nestor" bei Pylos in Messenien/SW-Peloponnes", in: *Zeitschrift für Archäologie* 27 (1993) 151-173; Bernd JORDAN, *Tierknochenfunde aus der Magula Pevkakia in Thessalien* (Ph. D. dissertation Munich 1975). Gisela HINZ, *Neue Tierknochenfunde aus der Magula Pevkakia in Thessalien. I: Die Nichtwiederkäuer* (Ph. D. dissertation Munich 1979). Compare also Sebastian PAYNE, "Zoo-Archaeology in Greece: A Reader's Guide", in: Nancy C. WILKIE, William D. E. COULSON (ed.), *Contributions to Aegean Archaeology: Studies in Honor of William A. McDonald* (Minnesota 1985) 211-244; David S. REESE, "Recent work in Greek zooarchaeology", in: Nick KARDULIAS (ed.), *Beyond the Site: Regional Studies in the Aegean Area* (Lanham 1994) 191-221; Eleni KOTJABOPOULOU, Yannis HAMILAKIS, Paul HALSTEAD, Clive

However, on the one hand, the spectrum of finds reflects only a selective sample of all the edible plants and animal resources existing in the Mycenaean period, and on the other hand, it can of course not be assumed *a priori* that any potential food resource was actually used by the people of that time. For example, we know nothing about cultural or religious preferences or food-related taboos that may well have existed in Mycenaean times. Unfortunately, the monuments of Mycenaean art are of limited source value as they barely depict scenes of everyday life. Although there are a few depictions of potential foodstuff, its production, processing and preparation are not represented, and also occasional scenes of food consumption represent exceptions.[7]

3. General remarks on the Mycenaean diet

Many products that are associated with the Mediterranean diet nowadays were not known to the Mycenaeans: the meat of chicken and turkey, potatoes, corn, rice, tomatoes, eggplant, green beans, peaches, oranges, lemons, sugar and pepper were introduced to Greece in later periods.[8] But what were the edibles that were available to the people in Late Bronze Age

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GAMBLE, Paraskevi ELEFANTI (ed.), *Zooarchaeology in Greece. Recent Advances* (London 2003).

[7] On plants in Minoan art see Martin MÖBIUS, "Pflanzenbilder der minoischen Kunst in botanischer Betrachtung", in: *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1933) 1 – 39.

[8] For a general history of ancient Greek diet see Andrew DALBY, *Siren Feasts: A History of Food and Gastronomy in Greece* (London, New York 1995). On vegetal ressources in classical antiquity see Walter HONDELMANN, *Die Kulturpflanzen der griechisch-römischen Welt. Pflanzliche Ressourcen der Antike* (Berlin, Stuttgart 2002).

Greece?[9] The basis of the Mycenaean diet was formed by grain, and in most regions barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) was most important, followed by emmer wheat (*Triticum dicoccum*). Other crops were known, but played only a limited role: bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum/durum*), which became the most important grain in the course of the so-called "Dark Ages", einkorn (*Triticum monococcum*), spelt (*Triticum spelta*) and millet (*Panicum miliaceum*), which was a major crop in Macedonia. The grain was either coarsely ground and processed to soups and porridges or milled to produce flour for flatbreads. Whether beer was also brewed, remains unclear.
Legumes were also of great importance: lentil (*Lens culinaris*), pea (*Pisum sativum*), bitter vetch (*Vicia ervilia*), the chickpea (*Cicer arietinum*), broad bean (*Vicia faba*), common vetch (*Vicia sativa*), lupine (*Lupinus sp.*) and different species of vetchlings (*Lathyrus sp.*) Interestingly, the poisonous and only barely edible bitter vetch seems to have played a extraordinarily important role. The legumes were processed into soups and purees, moreover they have been ground to

[9] The following short summary is based on my unpublished Ph.D. thesis: Josef FISCHER, *Ernährung im spätbronzezeitlichen Griechenland* (Ph. D. dissertation Salzburg 2002, published as *Ernährung im mykenischen Griechenland*, Kraków 2017). See there for a detailed discussion of all sources and full references. For general information about Mycenaean food see also Kenton F. VICKERY, *Food in early Greece* (Illinois 1936); Gerda BRUNS, *Küchenwesen und Mahlzeiten*, in: Friedrich MATZ, Hans-Günter BUCHHOLZ (ed.), *Archaeologia Homerica. Die Denkmäler und das frühgriechische Epos*, Band III, Kapitel Q (Göttingen 1970), 1-31; see also various articles in the volume by Sarah J. VAUGHAN, William D. E. COULSON (ed.), *Palaeodiet in the Aegean. Papers from a colloquium held at the 1993 meetings of the Archaeological Institute of America in Washington D.C.* (Oxford 2000); cf. also Josef FISCHER, "Und sie erhoben die Hände zum lecker bereiteten Mahle – Ernährung im mykenischen Griechenland", in: Antike Welt 5/2014, 44-50.

flour from which bread was produced. Roasting and the consumption of raw legumes can also be assumed (in general more food was eaten raw in the Bronze Age than today).
Likewise, various fruits were an essential part of the Late Bronze Age diet, for example olives, which were both pickled and then consumed as fruit as well as processed into olive oil, or (dried) figs, which were especially important. Another product of early Greek agriculture was wine, which has been flavored as in later times, e.g. with resin (compare today's Greek *retsina*), herbs or honey. In the diet of the common people wine was only of limited importance. It probably was not available to everybody in large quantities, but rather a drink of the aristocracy, and it also had a certain importance in the cult. The most common drink in everyday life was certainly water. The diet was supplemented with other fruits and nuts such as pears (*Pyrus* sp.), pomegranates (*Punica granatum*), cornel cherries (*Cornus mas*), hawthorn (*Crataegus sp.*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), plums (*Prunus domestica*), blackberries (*Rubus fruticosus*), wild strawberries (*Fragaria vesca*), muskmelons (*Cucumis melo*), acorns (*Quercus* sp.), chestnuts (*Castanea sativa*), almonds (*Prunus amygdalus*) or pistachios (*Pistacia atlantica*). Some of these fruits and nuts were grown (e.g. pomegranates), others were collected (e.g. acorns).
Various vegetables and aromatic plants, which are also both grown in gardens or collected from the wild, played an equally important role in early Greek diet, such as cucumbers (*Cucumis sativus*), parsnips (*Pastinaca sativa*), leek (*Allium ampeloprasum*), garlic (*Allium sativum*), lettuce (*Lactuca sativa*), capers (*Capparis spinosa*), juniper (*Juniperus communis*), wormwood (*Artemisia absinthium*), anise (*Pimpinella sativum*), rue (*Ruta graveolens*), papaver (*Papaver somniferum*), garden cress (*Lepidium sativum*), watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*), coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*), celery (*Apium graveolens*), fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), spearmint (*Mentha viridis*), pennyroyal (*Mentha*

pulegium), cumin (*Cuminum cyminum*), coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*), sesame (*Sesamum indicum*), saffron (*Crocus sativus*), or various types of aromatic grasses and thistles.

Also the role of animal source foods must not be underestimated in the Late Bronze Age Greece; studies have shown that they were as important for the Mycenaeans as vegetable foods. The meat was provided primarily by domestic animals. Beef was consumed most, followed by pork, lamb and goat meat. Besides cattle, pigs, sheep and goats other domestic animals were dogs, horses, donkeys and mules, and also their meat was eaten occasionally. The dogs were usually consumed as puppies, while the equines were already adult when they were slaughtered (having previously served as work animals). Hunted wild animals supplemented the diet; a major role was played in this respect by red and fallow deer, wild boars and small animals such as rabbits or badgers. But also other animals were used as meat suppliers, such as beavers, martens, hedgehogs, otters, seals, lynx, red foxes, brown bears and even lions! It seems quite plausible to assume that the consumption of lions might have been a privilege of kings. There were also various wild birds whose consumption is proven by cuttings marks on many bird bones. Especially geese (*Anser anser*), which could even have been living as domesticated animals around the settlements, and mallards (*Anas platyrhynchos*) were regular food sources, also mute swans (*Cygnus olor*), cranes (*Grus grus*) or doves (*Columba sp.*) were eaten. Various types of turtles – especially *Testudo marginata* and *Testudo hermanni* – were consumed as well, usually as young animals.

In principle, all edible parts of the named animals have been used, including the brain and the bone marrow. The meat was eaten fresh, dried or smoked; it was roasted on a grate or on a spit or boiled in stews along with cereals, legumes and vegetables.

Of the secondary animal products, fresh milk was probably consumed only to a small extent (lactose intolerance in adults was probably widespread in Mycenaean Greece), but mainly processed into cheese. Honey was the main sweetener in the Late Bronze Age Greece.

Fish and seafood played only a small role in the Mycenaean diet, which seems surprising at first sight. But at a second look this is quite comprehensible considering that on the one hand the Aegean is generally not particularly rich in fish and with Bronze Age methods only the less lucrative coastal areas could be harvested, and that on the other hand the storage and transport of fish and seafood over greater distances was very problematic. Consequently, it has been observed for the Mycenaean period, that especially people of higher social status consumed a greater amount of marine food than the rest of the population. This should, by the way, not change during the following centuries: even in Classical Greece fish was not a staple food, but rather a valued luxury product.[10]

[10] On the importance of fish in the ancient diet see the most inspiring book by Thomas W. GALLANT, *A Fisherman's Tale: An Analysis of the Potential Productivity of Fishing in the Ancient World* (Gent 1985). On fishing in the Aegean Bronze Age see Mark ROSE, *With line and glittering bronze hook: Fishing in the Aegean Bronze Age* (Ph. D. dissertation Indiana University, Ann Arbor, Michigan 1994); Judith POWELL, *Fishing in the Prehistoric Aegean* (Jonsered 1996). On the consumption of fish in Mycenaean Greece see Josef FISCHER, "Ernährung und Fischkonsum im spätbronzezeitlichen Griechenland", in: Eva ALRAM-STERN, Georg NIGHTINGALE (ed.), *Keimelion. Elitenbildung und elitärer Konsum von der mykenischen Palastzeit bis zur homerischen Epoche. Akten des internationalen Kongresses vom 3. bis 5. Februar 2005 in Salzburg* (Wien 2007) 125-139.

4. Distinctions and generalizations

It has of course to be stressed that there was not **one** Mycenaean diet. Not everywhere the same edibles were consumed as often as in other places. For example, millet played a greater role in northern Greece than in the south, and also more meat of wild animals was consumed in the north. On the Cyclades less beef and more lamb and goat meat was eaten than on the mainland. Even within each region differences between the diet of the inhabitants of the centers and the periphery can be observed as well as between the diet of people of higher social status and the members of the lower classes. It is not surprising that the members of the aristocracy were better nourished than their less wealthy contemporaries. These few examples illustrate that hasty generalizations and simplistic models have to be avoided in the study of culinary history. Such a model, which is quite questionable, is the concept of the so-called Mediterranean triad of cereals, olives and wine, which are supposed to have constituted the main part of the prehistoric Greek diet.[11] But this concept highlights only the most prestigious groups of vegetable foods and not the nutritionally most important foodstuffs. So, for example, the importance of wine is overestimated, while the key role of legumes and figs as well as the importance of animal source foods are ignored.[12]

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[11] The application of this system can lead to severe misunderstandings of prehistoric and ancient diet, as in: F. R. RILEY, *The Role of the Traditional Mediterranean Diet in the Development of Minoan Crete. Archaeological, Nutritional and Biochemical Evidence*, BAR International Series 810 (Oxford 1999).

[12] Compare Anaya SARPAKI, "The Palaeoethnobotanical Approach. The Mediterranean Triad or Is It a Quartet?", in: Berit WELLS, *Agriculture in Ancient Greece, Proceedings of the 7th International Symposium at the Swedish Institute at Athens* (Stockholm 1994) 61-76.

5. Nutritional status

Like the composition of Mycenaean diet the nutritional status of the people in Late Bronze Age Greece was quite variable as well. For example, people of higher social status were better nourished than the common people. Generally, the Mycenaeans probably got all the necessary amino acids and minerals needed, but they consumed too little iron, and they got not enough proteins. All in all, the calorific intake was too low, which resulted in a non-optimal growth and a lower resistance to diseases and infections. Diseases associated with a lack of certain nutrients (e.g. anaemia) can be detected in several cases. A diet with a high proportion of carbohydrates, like the Mycenaean diet, seems often be combined with a lower life expectancy. The lack of sugar and the probably only sporadic use of honey contributed to a generally good condition of the teeth. The predominant use of olive oil instead of animal fats resulted in a relatively low cholesterol diet. But regarding the fact that most people did not get old enough to develop coronary heart diseases, this was of minor medical significance. All in all, the Mycenaean diet was below the optimum level by modern standards, but it allowed a sufficient degree of good health.

6. Food in the Linear B texts

The texts record quite a wide variety of food.[13] They register, in considerable quantities, two types of grain, characterized by

[13] On food in the Linear B texts see Josef FISCHER, "Nahrungsmittel in den Linear B-Texten", *Chiron* 33 (2003) 175-194. There an extensive discussion of all attestations and a full bibliography can be found. For the Linear B terms mentionned in this papers see the corresponding entries in Francisco AURA JORRO, *Diccionario Micénico*, Vol. I-II (Madrid 1985, 1993).

the ideogram *120 GRA(num) and *121 HORD(eum) respectively. The interpretation as a grain is not only suggested by the form of both ideograms, but also by their connection with the term *si-to* (σῖτος). Unfortunately it is not possible to decide which grains are represented by those two ideograms. The old hypothesis formulated by LEONARD PALMER,[14] that *120 stands for wheat and *121 for barley is based on invalid presumptions and cannot be held up any longer. The only grain, which is directly mentioned in the texts, is *ki-ri-ta /krithā/* "barley", but unfortunately there is no ideogram in this text. Furthermore, flour is registered as *me-re-u-ro /meleuron/* and by means of the ideogram *65 FAR(ina).[15]

Olives are denoted by means of the ideogram *122 OLIV(a), which probably represents the characteristic flower of the olive tree,[16] and even more frequently the texts record the olive oil obtained from these fruits, which is denoted by means of the ideogram *130 OLE(um) or by the term *e-ra$_3$-wo*

[14] Leonard PALMER, *The Interpretation …*, 97.

[15] On grain in the Linear B texts see Ruth PALMER, "Wheat and barley in Mycenaean society", in: Jean-Pierre OLIVIER (ed.), *Mykenaika: Actes du 9e Colloque Internationale sur les Textes Mycéniens et Égéens*, BCH suppl. 25 (Athens 1992) 475-497; Paul HALSTEAD, "Late Bronze Age Grain Crops and Linear B Ideograms *65, *120, and *121", *Annual oft the British School at Athens* 90 (1995) 229-234.

[16] The tablets distinguish between two kinds of olives: OLIV+*A* and OLIV+*TI*, which is usually explained as wild and cultivated olives. The olives are often designated as fruits *ka-pa /karpa/*. However, the monogram *KAPO* cannot be connected to καρπός, as is shown in Josef FISCHER, "Bemerkungen zur Bedeutung dreier Linear B-Begriffe: *ka-pa*, *ka-po*, *KAPO*", *Diomedes. Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Alte Geschichte und Altertumskunde der Universität Salzburg* 3 (2004) 37-47.

/elaiwon/.[17] Figs are recorded in the texts by the abbreviation *NI*, which probably stands for the old Cretan word νικύλεον,[18] and in one case as *su-ko /sūkōn/*. Wine is found in the texts denoted by means of the ideogram *131 VIN(um) and by the term *wo-no /woinos/*.[19]

About vegetables and herbs, which formed an important part of the human diet since earliest times, the Linear B texts supply particularly valuable information, because these plants are barely detectable archaeologically. This applies especially to collected wild plants, since in contrast to cultivated plants no seed surplus was obtained. Evidence for vegetables and spices is therefore sparse in the Bronze Age Aegean, but this fact must not obscure the importance of these plants. All the more valuable in this case is the Linear B evidence. The texts mention a number of spices such as *se-ri-no /selīnon/* "celery", as *ko-ri-ja-do-no /koriadnon/* "coriander", *ku-mi-no /kumīnon/* "cumin" or *ma-ra-tu-wo /marathwon/* "fennel". As *mi-ta /minthā/* and *da-ra-ko /dlākhōn/* probably two different types of mint, namely the spearmint and pennyroyal, are recorded, as *sa-sa-ma /sāsama/* we can find the sesame in the texts, and under the designation of *ka-da-mi-ja /kardamia/* the cress is

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[17] On olives and olive oil in the Linear b texts see José L. MELENA, "Olive Oil and other sorts of Oil in the Mycenaean Tablets", *Minos* 18 (1983) 89-123.

[18] See Günter NEUMANN, Νικύλεον, *Glotta* 40 (1962) 51-54.

[19] On wine in the Linear B texts see Ruth PALMER, *Wine in the Mycenaean Palace Economy*, Aegaeum 10 (Liège 1994). On the plantation of fruit trees see also Stefan HILLER, "Fruchtbaumkulturen auf Kreta und in Pylos", in: Alfred HEUBECK, Günter NEUMANN (ed.), *Res Mycenaeae. Akten des VII. Mykenologischen Colloquiums in Nürnberg vom 6.-10. April 1981* (Göttingen 1983) 171-201. On Myceanean horticulture compare also Josef FISCHER, "Gartenbau im spätbronzezeitlichen Griechenland", in: Monika FRASS, Kurt GENSER, Herbert GRAßL, Georg NIGHTINGALE (ed.), *Akten des 10. Österreichischen Althistorikertages, Salzburg, 11.11. – 13.11.2004* (Wien 2006) 61-71.

registered, either the garden cress or the water cress. There are some names of aromatics in the texts which are not securely identified: the term *ku-pa-ro* /*kupeiros*/ designates probably different species of sedges, the term *pa-ko* can be interpreted either as /*sphakos*/ "sage" or as /*phaskon*/, an aromatic lichen. The term *ko-no* /*schoinos*/ probably designates several species of aromatic grasses, while the term *ka-na-ko* /*knākos*/ might stand for different species of thistles. Not unambiguously identified is the quite frequently documented plant *po-ni-ki-jo*, which has been connected with both φοῖνιξ, the date palm, as well as with various dye plants such as safflower or alkanet. Controversial is also the interpretation of the *ki-ta-no*, which most likely refers to the terebinth.[20]

The Linear B documents also register large herds of sheep, goats, cattle and pigs. Sheep are recorded by means of the ideogram *106 OVIS, goats by means of the ideogram *107 CAP(ra), cattle by the ideogram *109 BOS, pigs by the ideogram *108 SUS. When these animals are recorded, the texts distinguish between male and female specimens, and accompanying abbreviations provide further information about certain types of animals: so, for example, pigs are occasionally characterized as porkers by the ligatured syllable *SI*, which stands for *si-a$_2$-ro* /*sihalos*/. Equines are usually recorded by

[20] On spices in the Linear B texts see Michel WYLOCK, "Les aromates dans les tablettes Ge de Mycènes", *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici* 15 (1972) 105-146; John T. KILLEN, "On the Mycenae Ge tablets", in: Alfred HEUBECK, Günter NEUMANN (ed.), *Res Mycenaeae. Akten des VII. Mykenologischen Colloquiums in Nürnberg vom 6.-10. April 1981* (Göttingen 1983) 216-233; Isabelle ERARD-CERCEAU, "Végétaux, Parfums et Parfumeurs à l'Époque Mycénienne", *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici* 28 (1990) 251-285.
Anaya SARPAKI, "Condiments, perfume and dye plants in Linear B: A look at the textual and archaeobotanical evidence", in: Anna MICHAILIDOU (Hrg.), *Manufacture and Measurement. Counting, Measuring and Recording Craft Items in Early Aegean Societies* (Athens 2001) 195-265.

means of the ideogram *105 EQU(us), the horse is found as *i-qo*, the donkey as *o-no*.[21]
The texts mention secondary animal products as well: cheese is recorded as *TU-RO$_2$ /tūrjoi/,* and honey, the main sweetener in the Late Bronze Age Greece, is registered as a *me-ri /meli/* or by means of the abbreviation *ME*.
Of course, it has to be kept in mind that many of these foodstuffs are usually recorded in the Linear B texts in a non-culinary context: the grain ideogram *120 is most often found in the context of land tenure texts, where the size of land plots is measured by the quantity of seed required for a sowing. At first sight this method looks rather strange, but is quite reasonable, as it allows for the difference in productivity in different types of land.
Likewise, the olive oil and many of the aromatics are most often mentioned in connection with the production of perfumed oils, which seems to have been an important branch of Mycenaean economic activity.[22] The sheep are listed primarily in the context of the wool production which provided the basis for the textile industry, another major

[21] Many important articles have been written on various aspects of animals in the Linear B texts. Compare for example Paul HALSTEAD, "Lost Sheep? On the Linear B Evidence for Breeding Flocks at Knossos and Pylos," *Minos* 25-26 (1990-91) 343-365; John T. KILLEN, "Records of Sheep and Goats at Mycenaean Knossos and Pylos", in: J. Nicholas POSTGATE and Marvin A. POWELL (ed.), *Domestic Animals of Mesopotamia*, Part I, Bulletin of Sumerian Agriculture 7 (Cambridge 1993) 209–218; Manuela KOHL, "Tierhaltung im mykenischen Reich von Pylos: Die Cn-Serie der Linear B-Texte", *Anzeiger der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 142. Jahrgang (2007) 5-78.
[22] On perfume production in Mycenaean Pylos see Cynthia SHELMERDINE, *The Perfume Industry of Mycenaean Pylos* (Göteborg 1985).

branch of Mycenaean economy, especially in Knossos.[23] So we cannot be sure that all foodstuffs recorded in the Linear B texts were really eaten. On the other hand, we can – with some certainty – assume the potential food resources were mostly used by the people in the Late Bronze Age Greece. Unfortunately, however, we do not know of any cultural or religious food taboos, which we know from other cultures, and which might perfectly have existed in the Bronze Age Aegean as well.

7. Foodstuff missing in the Linear B texts

It is quite instructive to consider not only the foodstuffs, which are recorded in the Linear B texts, but it is also worthwhile to look at those that do not occur. Most striking is the absence of pulses. They are important protein sources, they are very well storable when dried, and therefore, they are among the most important crops since the beginning of agriculture. As their omnipresence in the archaeobotanical record shows, vetches, vetchlings, lentils, beans, peas and chickpeas also played an essential role in the Mycenaean diet. But in the Linear B texts, surprisingly, they don't seem to occur. For this, several explanations are possible. It is possible that the corresponding ideograms or terms are not yet identified, or that the relevant

[23] The basic article on the Mycenaean wool industry remains John T. KILLEN, "The Wool Industry of Crete in the Late Bronze Age", Annual of the British School at Athens 59 (1964) 1-15. For a thorough analysis of this economic branch see now Marie-Louise Bech NOSCH, *The Organization of the Mycenaean Textile Industry* (Ph. D. dissertation Salzburg 2000). Compare also Josef FISCHER, "Freie und unfreie Arbeitsverhältnisse in der mykenischen Textilproduktion", in: Mustafa Erdem KABADAYI, Tobias REICHARDT (ed.), *Unfreie Arbeit: Ökonomische und kulturgeschichtliche Perspektiven* (Hildesheim – Zürich – New York 2007) 3-37.

texts are either not preserved or have not been found yet. Both explanations, however, seem unlikely. It is also possible that the cultivation and further processing and consumption of pulses did not fall under the responsibility of the highly specialized palace administration. But the frequent finds of pulses from the Mycenaean palaces areas make this explanation quite unconvincing.

8. The production of food under palatial control

The Mycenaean palatial administration monitored closely the production of certain foodstuffs in certain areas.[24] Responsible for this task was a special supervisory staff, which is named in the texts. The texts **PY Jn 829**.2 and **PY Jn 881**.2, for example, record the term *o-pi-su-ko*, which can be interpreted as "overseer of the figs". Another official title might be hidden behind the phrase *su-ko po-ro-du*[on **PY Ep 613**.4, since it is possible to amend here *su-ko po-ro-du-ma*. The *du-ma* and his deputy, the *po-ro-du-ma*, are well-documented functionaries in the Linear B texts. So we possibly have a "deputy overseer over the figs" from which the existence of a not documented **su-ko du-ma* can be inferred. How this *su-ko du-ma* was related to the *o-pi-su-ko*, we cannot know. In addition to the *o-pi-su-ko* the tablet **PY Jn 829** names another functionary

[24] On the Mycenaean palatial economy see Josef FISCHER, "Die mykenische Palastwirtschaft. Aspekte frühgriechischen Wirtschaftslebens im Spiegel der Linear B-Texte", in: Sven GÜNTHER (ed.), *Ordnungsrahmen antiker Ökonomien. Ordnungskonzepte und Steuerungsmechanismen antiker Wirtschaftssysteme im Vergleich* (Wiesbaden 2012) 41-81. See also John T. KILLEN, "The Linear B tablets and the Mycenaean economy", in: Anna MORPURGO-DAVIES, Yves DUHOUX (ed.), *Linear B: A 1984 Survey. Proceedings of the Mycenaean Colloquium of the VIIIth Congress of the International Federation of the Societies of Classical Studies* (Louvain-la-Neuve 1985) 241-305.

called *o-pi-ka-pe-e-u*. The interpretation of this term is much disputed, but one suggestion was to connect it with */karpos/* and thus interpret it as an "overseer of the fruits". As the term *ka-po* is exclusively connected with olives, the *o-pi-ka-pe-e-u* could be the "overseer responsible for the olive trees". If this interpretation is right, we have here the Pylian correspondent of the Knossian *e-ra-wo du-ma*, the "warden of the olives" mentioned on the tablet **KN C 1039**. Finally we can find some hints for the existence of an "overseer responsible for the growing of vines" as the text **PY Jo 438** records another *du-ma*, whose name or designation begins with the syllables *wo-no*, and of course it would therefore be tempting to connect this official with wine, the fragmentary state of this text puts this assumption in the realm of speculation. Another attested official is the *me-ri-du-ma* or *me-ri-da-ma*, the "overseer over honey", who had to monitor the production, supply and transport of honey.

9. Personnel connected with the production of foodstuff

The Linear B tablets register some professional designations of people occupied with the production and processing of food. Gardeners, for example, are named as *pu$_2$-te-re* */phutēres/* (vgl. φυτῆρες). If the designation *te-u-ta-ra-ko-ro* can be interpreted as "gatherer of beetroot" has to remain doubtful. Controversially interpreted is also the designation *po-qa-te-u*, which most probably has to be connected with *po-qa* */phorg^{w}a/* (vgl. φορβή) "food". The shepherd was called *po-me* */poimēn/*, the goatherd *a$_3$-ki-pa-ta* */aigipā(s)tās/*, the cattle herders is referred to as *qo-u-ko-ro* /g^{w}oukolos/ and the swineherd as *su-qo-ta* */sugwōtās/*. The term **me-ri-t-e-u* */meliteus/* (only attested in the genitive) designates an apiarist. Bakers are known as *a-to-po-qo* */artopok^{w}ōi/* cf. ἀρτοκόπος. A related designation is *a-si-to-po-qo*, which is to be interpreted either as a confusion of *a-to-po-qo* and *si-to-po-qo* */sītopok^{w}os/*

(cf. σιτοποιός) "miller, baker" or as a misspelling of *a-pi-to-po-qo /alphitopok^{w}os/* (cf. ἀλφιτοποιός) "preparer of barley groats". The *me-re-ti-ri-ja/me-re-ti-ra$_2$ /meletriai/* are probably the women who are responsible for the production of flour (*me-re-u-ro*), while the duty of the *si-to-ko-wo /sītokhowōi/*, who most likely had to do with the processing of cereals, remains unclear. Much disputed is the meaning of the term *do-qe-ja*, which has been interpreted as the name of a goddess,[25] but more likely it is a professional designation that has to be connected with δόρπον "evening meal". This profane interpretation is supported by the occurrence of the male form *do-qe-u* in the personnel list **KN B(5) 804**.

10. The import and export of food

Various sources suggest a lively trade in edibles in the Late Bronze Age Aegean. For example, an Akkadian text from Ugarit (PRU 3, 107 [RS 16.238]) records the import of cereals (*še'u*), a fermented drink (*šikaru*) and oil (*šamnu*) from Crete, while the famous *Papyrus Ebers* mentions beans from *Keftiu* (= Crete). Archaeological finds also testify the trade of foodstuffs. Most spectacular was the discovery of shipwreck of the 14th century BC at Ulu Burun. On board of this ship coriander, black cumin, sumac, safflower, capers, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, almonds, acorns, pine nuts and hundreds of Canaanite amphorae containing terebinth raisins were found.
Unfortunately, the Linear B texts provide almost no information about the trade with foodstuffs in Mycenaean times. Only one tablet, **PY Fr 1231**.2 gives some hints as it registers olive oil as *ke-se-ni-wi-jo /ksenwion/* "foreign" resp. "for export" – although this oil was rather for cosmetic

[25] Compare e.g. Francisco R. ADRADOS, "Do-qe-ja, diosa micénica de la fecundidad", *Minos* 5 (1957) 53-57.

purposes than for consumption. Nevertheless, some information can be obtained, if the tablets are scrutinized with particular regard to imported edibles.
Sesame, for example, which is of importance both as a spice and as an oilseed, needs a warm and humid climate to thrive and has its origin in the countries around the Indian Ocean. In the Linear B texts, he recorded – as mentioned above – as *sa-sa-ma* (or the abbreviation *SA*), which corresponds to Classical Greek σήσαμον. This Greek word obviously is of Semitic origin (cf. Akkadian *Šamaššammu*). It is the same with the Linear B term for cumin, *ku-mi-no*, which is equivalent to Classical Greek κύμινον (and Latin *cuminum*), which also has a Semitic origin (cf. Akkadian *Kamunu*). The quantities of both spices recorded in the Linear B texts are quite small. This may reflect their rarity or value in Mycenaean times. They played only a minor role in the Mycenaean diet, perhaps cumin was also used in medicine and in the production of perfumes. Probably both spices were imported in Mycenaean times, but it is not ruled out that cumin was already grown in Greece even in this early period (it was grown in Greece in the Classical period). The Semitic names of both spices testify however that they once came from the Middle East.

11. The Mycenaean rationing system

The Mycenaean palaces distributed monthly rations of grain and other foodstuff to dependent personnel.[26] This can be shown, for example, on text **KN Am(2) 819** where a ration of grain (*si-to*) for the period of one month (LUNA) for a working group (*we-ke-i-ja /werge(h)ial/*) consisting of 18 men and 8 boys (*ko-wo*) is distributed:

[26] On the Mycenaean rationing system see Ruth PALMER, "Subsistence Rations at Pylos and Knossos", *Minos* 24 (1989) 89-124.

KN Am(2) 819

.A] we-ke-i-ja VIR 18 'ko-wo' 8
.B]qa-ra / si-to LUNA 1 HORD 9 T 7 V 3

Similar rationing tablets are known from all palaces. The text **MY Au 658**, for example, records the distribution of 4 units of grain (*si-to*) to 20 men:

MY Au 658

sup. mut.

.1]ra-si-jo VIR[
.2]-ri-jo VIR 1 [
.3 *vacat* [
.4 to-so VIR 20 si-to GRA 4 [
.5 *vacat* [

The Mycenaean rationing system is best known from the **Py Ab** texts, for which one example shall be shown here.[27] The tablet **PY Ab 558** records the allotment of a ration of grain and dried figs to four "maids of all work" *pa-ko-we /panworges/* in Pylos and to their three children:

PY Ab 558

.A GRA 1 T 8 *TA DA*
.B pu-ro , pa-wo-ke MUL 4 ko-wa 2 ko-wo 1 *NI* 1 T 8

Although it is not explicitly stated, these are monthly rations as well, and they consist of 2 T subunits for every woman and half of this amount for every child. The meaning of the abbreviations *TA* and *DA* is not entirely clear, they might stand

[27] On these texts see John CHADWICK, "The Women of Pylos", in: Jean-Pierre OLIVIER, Thomas G. PALAIMA (ed.), *Texts, Tablets and Scribes. Studies in Mycenaean Epigraphy and Economy offered to Emmett L. Bennett, Jr.*, Supplementos a Minos 10 (Salamanca 1988) 43-95.

for supervisors responsible for the female working groups, and those supervisors always get additional 7 subunits of each foodstuff. Corresponding tablets recording the allocation of foodstuff are also known from Thebes, for example, the two texts **TH Av 100** and **101**, which record the allotment of grain (*si-to*) to various recipients like the women (*ku-na-ki-si* /*gunaiksi*/) or the shepherd (*po-me-ne*):

TH Av 100

sup. mut.

.1] *vestigia*
.2], po-te-we , si-to , / ku-na-ki-si GRA 2 V 2 Z 2
.3]so , si-to GRA 3
.4]no 'VIR 1' pa-ro , zo-wa , e-re-u-te-ri 'MUL' 1
.5] wi-ri-ne-u VIR 1

TH Av 101

sup. mut.

.1] vest. [
.2]da-ro VIR 1 vest.[
.3]po-me-ne VIR 2 da[
.4] a-ko-da-mo VIR 2 T 6 V
.5]V 2 ma-di-je T 6 V 4 ko-ru-we T 2[
.6a] ku-su-to-ro-qa [
.6]-te / si-to to-pa-po-ro-i [

The exact context of these allocations is not known, but it has been suggested that they are to be interpreted not as ordinary rations but as food handed out to participants of religious festivals and sacrificial feasts. The term *ku-su-to-ro-qa* on this tablet has been interpreted as */ksuntrophe/* "all the food", but this interpretation has to remain doubtful.

12. Food and religion

It was common in antiquity to offer sacrifices to the gods in order to honour them, to thank them or to address a concern to them.[28] The sacrifices served to ward off evil; furthermore they were means of purification prior to specific ceremonies acts and of atonement for failures and offenses. They have always formed a central part of Greek cult. Basically, people sacrificed what was important and valuable to them. There were various forms of the Greek sacrifice, and they depended on the nature of the God, for whom the sacrifice was made, on the occasion of the sacrifice or the gender, age, profession or nationality of the person that was sacrificing. On the one hand, there were sacrifices of cereals and fruit or cheese. On the other hand, there were libations of wine, water, milk or honey. But the most important sacrifice was the sacrifice of animals, of cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, chicken, geese and even fish, dogs or horses. The animals had to be without any physical blame, sometime they had to be of a certain colour or gender. Sometimes the edible parts of the sacrificed animal were consumed by the people attending the sacrificial ceremony; in other cases the animal was completely burnt.
In the Linear B texts we can find many connections between food and religion. Foremost among these is the goddess *si-to-po-ti-ni-ja* "Lady of the grains" on **MY Oi 701**, who is

[28] On Greek sacrifices see Marcel DETIENNE, Jean-Pierre VERNANT (ed.), *La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec* (Paris 1979). Fundamental for the study of the Mycenaean sacrifice is Jörg WEILHARTNER, *Mykenische Opfergaben nach Aussage der Linear B-Texte*, Veröffentlichungen der Mykenischen Kommission 22 (Wien 2005). Compare also Jörg WEILHARTNER, "Religious Offerings in the Linear B Tablets: An Attempt at their Classification and Some Thoughts about their Possible Purpose", in: Carlos VARIAS GARCÍA (ed.), *Actas del Simposio Internacional "55 Años de Micenología (1952-2007)", Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Bellaterra, 12-13 de abril de 2007* (Bellaterra 2012) 207-231.

probably to be identified with the deity represented with bushels of grain in her hands on a well-known fresco from the *Cult Centre* at Mycenae. But more significant in this respect are the quite numerous attestations of food distributions to deities, sanctuaries and cult personnel denoted in the Linear B texts. Only a few examples can be shown here:

KN Gg(1) 702
.1 pa-si-te-o-i / me-ri *209 1
.2 da-pu$_2$-ri-to-jo , / po-ti-ni-ja 'me-ri' *209 1

KN Fp(1) 1 + 31
.1 de-u-ki-jo-jo 'me-no'
.2 di-ka-ta-jo / di-we OLE S 1
.3 da-da-re-jo-de OLE S 2
.4 pa-de OLE S 1
.5 pa-si-te-o-i OLE 1
.6 qe-ra-si-ja OLE S 1[
.7 a-mi-ni-so , / pa-si-te-o-i S 1[
.8 e-ri-nu , OLE V 3
.9 *47-da-de OLE V 1
.10 a-ne-mo , / i-je-re-ja V 4
.11 *vacat*
.12 to-so OLE 3 S 2 V 2

KN Gg 702 registers the allotment of one amphora of honey to all gods (pa-si te-o-i */pansi theoihi/*) and to the "Mistress of the labyrinth" (*da-pu$_2$-ri-to-jo po-ti-ni-ja /daburinthojjo potniā/*), the goddess of the palace of Knossos, as we might suspect. The second tablet presented here, **KN Fp 1+31**, records the assignation of small amounts of olive oil to various gods, sanctuaries and cult personnel in the month of *de-u-ki-jo*: to Diktaian Zeus, to the sanctuary of Daidalos, to the holy child, to all gods, to *qe-ra-si-ja* (a goddess of probable Minoan origin which is not further known), to all gods in Amnisos, to Erinys, to **47-da* (an unknown toponym) and to the priestess

of the winds. Another text from Pylos records far bigger quantities of food given to a god:

PY Un 718

.1 sa-ra-pe-da , po-se-da-o-ni , do-so-mo
.2 o-wi-de-ta-i , do-so-mo , to-so , e-ke-ra$_2$ -wo
.3 do-se , GRA 4 VIN 3 BOS^m 1
.4 tu-ro$_2$, *TURO$_2$* 10 ko-wo , *153 1
.5 me-ri-to , V 3
.6 *vacat*
.7 o-da-a$_2$, da-mo , GRA 2 VIN 2
.8 OVIS^m 2 *TURO$_2$* 5 a-re-ro , *AREPA* V 2 *153 1
.9 to-so-de , ra-wa-ke-ta , do-se ,
.10 OVIS^m 2 me-re-u-ro , FAR T 6
.a -ma
.11 VIN S 2 o-da-a$_2$, wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo , ka-
.12 GRA T 6 VIN S 1 *TURO$_2$* 5 me-ri[
.13 *vacat* [me-]ri-to V 1

This tablet records grain, wine, cattle, cheese, sheep, honey, oil and flour given to Poseidon as an obligation (*do-so-mo /dosmos/*) by various persons: *e-ke-ra-wo$_2$ /Enkhellawon/* (maybe the king of the Pylian state), the *da-mo /dāmos/* (the people, that is the community of the landholders), the *ra-wa-ke-ta /lāwāgetās/* (who is normally interpreted as the second highest official after the king) and the *wo-ro-ki-jo-ne-jo ka-ma* (which remain quite enigmatic). It is quite reasonable that the considerable amounts of foodstuff donated to the god formed part of a sacrificial banquet. While the honey of **KN Gg 701** and the oil of **KN Fp 1+31** were meant for the gods exclusively, the edibles of **PY Un 718** were to be consumed by the participants of a religious festival.

13. Mycenaean state banquets

State banquets and ritual feasting have been much discussed in Linear B scholarship for the last twenty years[29] after the publication of a set of sealings from Mycenaean Thebes which seem to document the contributions of single animals that would be sacrificed and consumed during communal banquets. Preparations for large-scale feasts can also be detected in the Pylos tablets, for example in the text **PY Un 138**, which records grain, olives, wine, sheep, goats, pigs and cattle obviously for a banquet with many hundred participants. Especially interesting is yet another tablet, **PY Un 2**, because it informs us about the reason for the banquet: a commensal ceremony is to be taking place on the occasion of the initiation of the king (*mu-jo-me-no , e-pi , wa-na-ka-te /mujomenoi epi wanaktei/*). Again impressing amounts of foodstuff are recorded: 1574 litres of grain, 14 litres of sedges, 115 litres of flour, 307 litres of olives, almost 10 litres of honey, 96 litres of figs, 585 litres of wine and 44 animals – sheep, goats, pigs and cattle – which could have provided more than 1200 kilograms of meat. Clearly, this is enough to feed the entire Pylian community, which might have consisted of 3000 inhabitants.

[29] On Mycenaean banquets see for example Gösta SÄFLUND, "Sacrificial Banquets in the 'Palace of Nestor'", *Opuscula Atheniensia* 13 (1980) 237-246; John T. KILLEN, "Thebes Sealings, Knossos Tablets And Mycenaean State Banquets", Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies 39 (1994) 67-84; Jörg WEILHARTNER, Überlegungen zu den mykenischen Bankettexten, *Minos* 37-38 (2002-2003) 255-268; various articles in: James C. WRIGHT (ed.), *The Mycenaean Feast*, Hesperia 73:2 (Princeton 2004); Jörg WEILHARTNER, "Some Observations on the Commodities in the Linear B Tablets Referring to Sacrificial Banquets", in: Louise A. HITCHCOCK, Robert LAFFINEUR, Janice L. CROWLEY (ed.), DAIS. *The Aegean Feast. Proceedings of the 12th International Aegean Conference, University of Melbourne, 25-29 March 2008* (Liège – Austin 2008) 411-426.

It is noteworthy that this text also names the responsible functionary, who is called *o-pi-te-ke-e-u* "overseer of the paraphernalia" (*/teukhea/*).[30]

14. Conclusions

It was only possible to address some selected aspects and to discuss a very limited number of Linear B texts in this paper. Nevertheless, it hopefully was possible to show that foodstuff plays an important role in the Mycenaean texts, and that these texts are a valuable source not only for the study of Mycenaean nutrition and eating habits, but also for the study of Mycenaean economy and Mycenaean religion. But, as is equally evident, many important questions cannot be answered yet, many aspects of the Mycenaean diet are still unclear, and – hopefully with the help of new findings – many efforts still have to be undertaken in order to get a more detailed picture of food in Bronze Age Greece.

[30] The paraphernalia for such large-scale banquets can be found in the **PY Ta** tablets, where exquisite furniture, vessels, portable stoves and instruments for the ritual slaughter of animals are registered.